

## Retrocomputing Beta


### Could you make a calculator without electronics ( using only, wire, electricity-source, and light-bulbs )? [duplicate]

Asked 9 days ago Active 8 days ago Viewed 60 times




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 This post is hidden. It was [deleted](#) 8 days ago by [Jean-François Fabre](#), [user3840170](#), [another-dave](#).

**This question already exists:**

[Was there ever an electrical computer made without electronics \(using only wire, an electricity source, and light globes\)? \[closed\]](#)

 Your post has been associated with a similar question. If this question doesn't resolve your question, [ask a new one](#).

Closed 9 days ago.

(Private feedback for you)

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Could you make a calculator without electronics ( using only, wire, electricity-source, and light-bulbs ) ?

Note - Using only, wire, electricity-source, and light-bulbs .

So when you press a decimal-number-key it puts it on a register as a binary-number, and then you press another number to add to it. You would have memory-wiring for adding 1+1 or 1+0 or 0+0.  
( I wonder if it could work just in decimal )

AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, just how powerful, could such a machine get ?

**NOTE** - An innovation, could be plug-in-pieces/electrical-contact-pieces ( acting like switches ) that would be of a different length ( depending on what part of a number they are ) to reach down to activate a different circuit of the calculation ( useful for the 'carry' of a binary calculation ).  
( Or, of course, the plug-in-piece could have multi-contact-switches, depending on what part of a number they are ).

Also, I wonder if theories used in [Multiway switching](#) / [Switching circuit theory](#) may be helpful.

I'm posting this as a separate question from [Was there ever an electrical computer made without electronics \( using only, wire, electricity-source, and light-globes \)?](#), since it may be useful to do so.

hardware

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edited Mar 14 at 20:23

asked Mar 14 at 5:07



mnml

405 2 6

2 Please, do not flood the site with questions that are at the core about the same issue. – [Raffzahn](#) Mar 14 at 5:17

Using only the *three* components listed (e.g. no buttons or switches?) might be challenging. How would your calculator know you'd pressed a button? But this question, as asked, would be more on-topic for the Electronics StackExchange. – [Kaz](#) Mar 14 at 7:20

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It's possible to make a calculator in many different ways that don't involve electronics. Before

3/23/2021 hardware - Could you make a calculator without electronics ( using only, wire, electricity-source, and light-bulbs )? - Retrocomputing Stack Exchange  
transistors became (cheaply) available, the usual way was mechanical. I've also seen a design that uses water.

The *traditional* method is an abacus.

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answered Mar 14 at 5:50



Chromatix

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